


Legislation Signed To Enhance School Safety And Expand Access To Mental Health Resources

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Governor Greg Abbott today signed into law several bills related to enhancing school safety and expanding access to mental health resources. The Governor was joined by members of the Legislature including Senators Larry Taylor, Jane Nelson, Kirk Watson and Royce West, and Representatives Greg Bonnen, Will Metcalf, Four Price, and John Zerwas.

Following the tragic shooting that occurred at Santa Fe High School on May 18, 2018, Governor Abbott convened a series of roundtables with input from legislators, educators, administrators, law enforcement, advocates, parents, and students to find solutions to ensure the safety and security of Texas students. As a result, the Governor unveiled a 40-point plan to address these concerns, and in his State of the State address, the Governor named school safety an emergency item for the Legislative Session. Multiple action items included in the plan are incorporated in the signed legislation.

“After the horrific shooting in Santa Fe and the subsequent school safety roundtables, I made school safety an emergency item to help prevent a tragedy like this from happening again,” said Governor Abbott. “Today, I am proud to sign legislation to make Texas schools safer for students and teachers. I thank members from both chambers, as well as the many stakeholders, who worked tirelessly to get these bills through the Legislature and to my desk today.”

Senate Bill 11 (Taylor/G. Bonnen) strengthens emergency preparedness and response protocols, improves school facilities standards, establishes better threat assessment protocols, and provides schools more funding for school safety efforts. The bill also establishes the Texas Child Mental Health Consortium to leverage higher education expertise in the state to improve the mental health care systems for Texas children.

House Bill 18 (Price/Watson) increases mental health training for educators and other school professionals to aid in early identification and intervention, emphasizes importance of mental health education for students, and improves access to mental and behavior health services through school based mental health centers and the hiring of mental health professionals.

House Bill 1387 (Hefner/Creighton) removes the cap on the number of school marshals that may be appointed per campus.

